

Observations from an Online Survey concerning the Practice of the 5th Buddhist Precept: Report of Preliminary Findings

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Contents

Observations from an Online Survey concerning the Practice of the 5 th Buddhist Precept: Report of Preliminary Findings.....	1
Contents.....	1
Acknowledgements	2
1. Introduction	2
2. Survey Design and Implementation	3
2.1 Survey Structure	3
2.2 Survey Content	3
2.3 Survey Implementation	4
3. Findings from the Survey	6
3.1 Brief Summary	6
3.2 Section 1: Demographics.....	7
3.3 Section 2: Views and practice of the precept.....	9
3.4 Section 3: Responses to hypothetical social situations	17
4. Conclusions	19
4.1 Constraints.....	19
4.2 Recommendations	20
References	20
Appendices	21
Appendix A: Summary Totals for each question.....	21
Comments (Q7)	24
Comments (Q10)	26
Comments (Q12)	29
Comments (Q16)	32
Comments (Q30)	41
Appendix B: Selected Totals by Tradition.....	43
Inclusive totals and proportions	43
Exclusive totals and proportions	43
Appendix C: Some Correlation Tables.....	45

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Any errors in this report are solely the fault of the author.

1. Introduction

This document presents preliminary findings from an online survey that was carried out concerning views and practices relating to the Fifth Precept in Buddhism. The survey was conducted over a period of two weeks in the first half of August 2009.

Very little fieldwork has been carried out with regard to the precepts and most of it has been in very specific contexts. For instance, one of the rare examples is a study of alcohol consumption among Thai men (Assanangkornchai, Conigrave and Saunders 2002). This research in the medical field looked at behaviour according to Thai customs, such as full moon observances and making merit. However, as its locus is health care it does not relate findings to the canonical literature, but rather draws on some contemporary teachers; it is also limited to Southern Thailand. Further, the data revealed some surprises: for instance, the alcohol-dependent subject was more likely to have stayed in a temple as a temple boy, than those who did not have a dependency. There was some speculation that this may have been due to broader socio-cultural factors.

In seeking to clarify the specifically *Buddhist* role, the present survey asks about current practice rather than religious upbringing; by *practitioners*, we are referring to those with an active interest and practice – people who may engage in a religious forum, be part of a network of religious organisations or who are researching in the field.

For its main objectives, the questionnaire seeks to determine how the Fifth Precept is understood and practised by Buddhists in contemporary society through indicative responses to the following:

- What Buddhists around the world understand by *pamādashana* (causes of heedlessness)
- How many and to what extent Buddhists are familiar with the fifth precept as presented in the Pali formula
- How important practitioners consider the fifth precept
- How Buddhist understandings and perceptions (as indicated above) relate to their actual behaviour.

There is particular interest in whether views and practices vary among different traditions and whether such variations may be attributable to some extent to distinctive teachings in the

respective schools, so much of the analysis is framed with that in mind.

A total of 50 or more responses were sought.

2. Survey Design and Implementation

In order to facilitate truthful responses, the survey was designed as fully anonymous, with no questions asked about personally identifiable information.

2.1 Survey Structure

The survey consisted of 30 numbered questions, presented in sequence. Both quantitative and qualitative indications were sought, for which the following question types were used:

- **Standard Response** Select at most one from a number of options (0 or more).
- **Multiple Response** Select any number of options (0 or more) – implemented as a series of checkboxes.
- **Comments Box:** A text box either added as a supplement to the above or free-standing.

The questions themselves were a mixture of open and closed questions: the former offer as responses definitive facts or measurements of specific qualities; the latter allow expression of sentiments to expand on and explore issues around particular themes. In this survey, specific theses were being tested, so most questions were closed, but to more generally inform the research six questions allowed comments.

2.2 Survey Content

The survey addressed the topic of intoxicants from the perspectives of theory and practice. The notion of ‘intoxicant’ can be broad; here it was mainly concerned with alcohol, with only a few questions concerning tobacco and other mind-altering substances.

The survey was divided into three main sections:

Section 1: Demographics

This section contained initial questions about gender, age, geographical area (continent) of residence, and population.

Respondents were asked whether they considered themselves ‘Buddhist’ – although aimed mainly at practitioners, it was open to all – and further, for affiliation according to ‘Southern,’ ‘Northern,’ ‘Eastern,’ and ‘Western’ schools, these terms approximating to the usage made in Harvey (1990). Very roughly, in the ‘Southern’ Schools are found practitioners of Therāvāda, whilst in ‘Northern’ and ‘Eastern’ Schools are found various Mahāyāna traditions. The option was inclusive, allowing more than one option to be selected.

Basic provision for indicating relative seniority/commitment was provided for by asking about teacher and ordination status, without specifying what these mean.

Section 2: Views and practice of the precept

The first few questions in this section asked about the respondent's knowledge of the Fifth Precept – in terms of its traditional formulation in Pali and the scope of its meaning.

The survey sought to ascertain the extent to which respondents undertook practices typically associated with being Buddhist – not only in terms of the undertaking of the Fifth Precept, but generally in terms of meditation, study and participation in communal Buddhist activities. Such a profile can be used as a basis for testing correlations, particularly between regular religious practice and specific behaviours.

Two other questions were designed to investigate distinctions between different traditions. One question offered seven statements seeking to gauge what was felt as most significant concerning the Fifth Precept. Another question offered 10 options on what are regarded as “the main benefits.” The options were chosen to reflect different emphases that may be found in the literature of different schools of Buddhism.

Section 3: Responses to hypothetical social situations

The final section asked about alcohol and tobacco consumption. It probed more deeply: to ask several questions to gauge responses in social situations. As with Section 2, some of the options were chosen to take account of particular teachings in some Buddhist traditions.

2.3 Survey Implementation

The survey could have been carried out in many ways, but owing to constraints on time it was carried out online on the Web using a dedicated questionnaire tool.

Tool Use

The survey was carried out using the Questionnaire tool in WebLearn, Oxford University's centrally hosted virtual learning environment: <http://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/>

This tool provides the following implementations of the question types:

- **Standard Response** Select at most one from a number of options (0 or more) – implemented as a series of ‘radio buttons’
- **Multiple Response** Select any number of options (0 or more) – implemented as a series of checkboxes.
- **Comments Box:** Implemented as a text box (standard form interface for typing one or more paragraphs).

A guide to the tool use is available at <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ltg/vle/docs/Questionnaires/index.xml>

Question Design

In order to allow for meaningful comparisons, especially correlations, a number of questions had scaled responses, both ascending and descending. Ranges were provided with consistency in mind, in linear or exponential scales. Questions seeking to gauge personal sentiments balanced

the number of options (as to e.g. favourable / unfavourable) with sufficient ranges to allow for the full extent of practice (e.g. time spent in meditation).

Anonymity and Other Ethical Considerations

No questions asked for personally identifiable information. To ensure that University account holders did not accidentally provide this, the survey was available only to those who did *not* log on.

The survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines indicated in CUREC. Some references are provided in this document. In particular, prospective respondents were informed about the nature of the work and what the survey consisted of; and were provided with assurances of anonymity, instructions on how to complete it, and information about how the data would be used.

Promotion

The main aim was to obtain a reasonably sized sample that covered fairly broadly Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western schools.

Accordingly, the survey was advertised as follows:

- Posts to a thread in the General Buddhism Discussion forum on **E-sangha** “a world-wide virtual community where Buddhists from a variety of traditions, and those who are interested in Buddhism, are able to meet together to discuss”¹
<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php>
- An e-mail forwarded to the mailing list for members of the Network of Buddhist by an Officer of the NBO.
<http://www.nbo.org.uk/>
- A few individual e-mails to academic contacts, particularly to one in Australia, who forwarded it on.

Note on Analytical Methodology

The Questionnaire tool is able to generate a Comma-Separated Value (CSV) file with each response given on an individual row. Options may be set for column outputs. In this case, each question has a single column except for multiple-response type questions, where each option has its own column. The values given in the columns (apart from comments) reflect the option labels, e.g. for Question 6, the output provides 7 columns with entries either blank (option not selected) or the particular letter (one of ‘A’ through ‘G’ respectively).

Statistical analyses were supported by mapping graded responses to points to the integer sequence: 0,1,2... Some correlations could then be investigated by comparing responses to pairs of questions. The comparisons were made for the entire cohort or sub-cohorts according to School and mainly with regard to consumption (Question 22). This is a very small proportion of possible correlations that could be investigated. In particular, correlations could be carried out

¹ From the E-Sangha Mission Statement in the forum’s Terms of Service:
<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?act=announce&f=143&id=43>

with partitioning according to geographical region, or age, or population, or teacher status.

Analyses were conducted in Excel except for the correlations, where SPSS (version 17) was used.

Inclusive and Exclusive Data Views

Question 7 on affiliation was frequently used as a pivot (or cross) table and allowed multiple responses. However, many statistical analyses require that a respondent is counted only once. So two sets of figures are typically given – inclusive (all responses included) and exclusive (only including responses from those who indicate just one affiliation).

3. Findings from the Survey

This section reports the main findings generally following the order in which questions were asked.

3.1 Brief Summary

The survey was duly carried out as planned during the first 2 weeks of August, with no problems reported. A total of 61 responses were received and overall the profiling data was quite broad. Affiliations were indicated for all four Schools ('Southern,' 'Northern,' 'Eastern,' and 'Western'). Although the numbers are modest and statistical findings are generally inconclusive, they were sufficient to provide indications of variation.

Taken as a cohort, almost all respondents consider the fifth precept important. Whilst practitioners in the Southern Schools are far more conversant with the Pali formula (and more likely to recite it), for the group as a whole there is generally no or infrequent alcohol consumption. Other practices – in scripture study and meditation are broadly comparable.

However variations emerge when probed about factors in the assessment of the Fifth precept in Question 13 and behaviour in social situations, in Questions 26 and 27. There was a particularly marked contrast between those in Southern and Northern Schools, the former generally following simpler lines of interpretation summed up by the complete avoidance of alcohol, whereas respondents from the Northern Schools saw the situation as more complex with, for instance, opportunities to practice generosity.

The following sections draw on the summary for each question in Appendix A, which provides totals for each question, including summary bar charts; reference is also made to correlation analyses in Appendix B.

Reception to the Survey

Although advice was sought from colleagues about the survey design itself, proper validation could only come from respondents themselves. Some general remarks were encouraged in Question 30, which provided a comments box. There were a few criticisms relating to the questionnaire design, though mainly regarding particular questions which were felt to be unclear or too narrowly focus – some respondents indicated their replies would be conditional on context.

There was only one generally critical response: one respondent felt that the survey by design

“does not allow for acceptable alternatives interpretations of the precepts or an understanding that the precepts developed situationally..i.e. they were not a rigid set of rules as i understand their development, not commandments from on high.” The validity of this view is not discussed here, but this survey did at least provide – especially in Question 13 a number of contrasting views, which could be amplified in comments.

More opportunities for response were also requested.

A few suggestions for further research arose, one of which we the relation between the 5th precept and psycho pharmacy, especially concerning forced medication.

A couple of comments succinctly reflected contrasting scriptural references, which we quote below:

“Since the mind is the leader of mental phenomena (Dhammapada), the mind altering drugs, which lead to loss of awareness/mindfulness, must be avoided. In this sense, one thinks it is the most important precept to observe.”

“I recognise the use of ritual and/or sacramental use of alcohol or mind-altering substances in some special circumstances. However, this should be only for the skilled contemplative who has gained some good measure of purity of mind, i.e. has dealt adequately with the mental defilements-neuroses.”

The former is representative of the early texts of Southern Schools, whilst the latter is indicative of later developments in Northern Schools.

More generally, in the academic study of religion there has in recent decades been more attention to enabling the voice of practitioners to be clearly articulated when carrying out any survey, analysis or discussion about individuals or groups. This is commonly called the ‘insider-outsider’ issue. In the thread advertising the survey on the e-Sangha forum², several members of the forum offered comments after completing it, all of which were positive, including a couple on the survey design. In the survey comments themselves, several commented on how the survey was interesting and thought-provoking, allowing reflection on one’s views. Overall the reception was quite enthusiastic.

3.2 Section 1: Demographics

First of all it may be noted from responses to Question 5 that most respondents were indeed Buddhist – a small minority of 5 people indicated they were not Buddhist, though one of these went on to indicate an affiliation with the Northern Schools. The gender balance of female to male was about 5:7 (Question 1). Each adult age range had several responses (Question 2), residences appeared to be mainly in substantial towns or cities, but far smaller civil communities were recorded (Question 4).

Geographical representation (Question 3) was strong from North America, Europe and Oceania (including Australia), i.e. from those parts of the world where English is the native language or

² <http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=91715>

very widely spoken as a second language, approximately ‘the West’. There was no question about ethnicity. So it is an open question as to how this affects responses, but the data is likely skewed to Westerners.

A key question for this survey was on affiliation (Question 7) in view of the aim to investigate distinct responses according to tradition. Technically, this meant using cross-tabulations (pivot tables) with rows derived from responses to this question. Choices made here were designed to allow for inclusivity. In terms of affiliation (Question 7), there was a fair spread with at least 10 responses for each of Southern, Northern, Eastern and Western Schools. Table 1 gives the totals for each School: the Inclusive Total adds up all those who indicated a the affiliation for a given School; whilst the Exclusive Total adds up those who indicated just that one affiliation; the Proportion Mixed indicates how many of the affiliations are Mixed for a particular School.

Tradition	Inclusive total	Exclusive total	Proportion Mixed
A: Southern Schools	22	17	5/22
B: Northern Schools	21	16	5/21
C: Eastern Schools	17	8	9/17
D: Western Schools	11	3	8/11
E: Other	1	1	0
Grand Totals		45(/56)	

Table 1: Affiliations (one or more could be selected)

Allowing more than one option to be selected was pertinent as 11 respondents selected at least 2 options, whereas 45 indicating only one affiliation. The mixing was mainly as expected with Western Schools, but a high proportion was also evident for Eastern Schools. Whilst mindful of the global mixing tendency of the Internet affecting the sample, this hybridity appears significant and it might be expected that the following kind of comment become increasingly common: “I consider myself a non-sectarian type of Mahayanist, but feel close to Soto Zen and Tibetan Buddhism.” The diversity was amplified in the responses to some of the more complex questions (see below).

However, incorporating inclusivity in just one question makes the statistical analysis more difficult – multiple denominations distorts proportions, whilst just counting those who made one choice excludes some respondents and again is not representative. In trying to develop theories about distinctive developments favour would naturally be given to the latter, in order to highlight contrasts. In practice, the sample sizes usually made this practical only for comparisons between Northern and Southern Schools. A future survey might insist on asking which tradition respondents feel most close to, with options for indicating additional affiliations.

Questions on age and longevity of practice were specified as ranges in years, so there are no precise figures for these. However, taking the midpoints of each age range as the basis of calculations (assuming 75 for those over 65), gives an estimated mean of close to 45 – a rough approximation as we don’t know the population distribution. Similarly, using this method (assuming average of 75 years practice for those over 65), gives an estimated mean for practice of

a little over 15 years. The large gap between average age and years of practice indicates that most respondents were not formally denoted Buddhists at birth, but had become Buddhist by choice³.

About 13% of respondents indicated they were teachers; four were ordained, though only two of these stated they were teachers.

3.3 Section 2: Views and practice of the precept

Relative Importance

Question 10 asked respondents to indicate which of the Five Precepts was/were thought most important: 61 respondents gave a total of 142 indications. The vast majority indicated ‘Taking Life’, which was twice as popular as three other options; and still more popular than the third on sexual misconduct.

In addition respondents could offer comments; these exhibit a range and depth of thought, particularly regarding interdependent relationships and perceptions of how the precepts should be regarded. In particular, six people commented on how breaking the Fifth Precept could lead to breaking the other four and other responses indicated contextual factors. Several commented on their interconnectedness and brought in more general considerations concerning positive counterparts.

Familiarity with the Formula

Questions 11 to 14 sought to gain information about knowledge and views of the fifth precept. Question 11 asked about familiarity with the original Pali formula; the following gives the responses from those who indicated only one affiliation.

	S	N	E	W
Very familiar	10	2	0	2
Quite familiar	4	1	1	0
Not very familiar	3	2	1	1
Not familiar at all	0	11	6	0

Table 2: Familiarity with Pali formula for Fifth Precept

As this is traditionally the scriptural language most used in Southern Schools, it is not surprising that members of this tradition are more familiar. However, this raises the issue of how the formula, especially the term *pamāda*, is translated and whether, in particular, *pamādaṭṭhānā*

³ By subtracting the upper figure of the longevity of practice from the lower figure of the age, an upper bound for those who considered themselves ‘born Buddhist’ could be deduced as those for whom this calculation resulted in a number less than or equal to zero. Only six respondents fell into this category, all of whom were practitioners in the Southern Schools. Furthermore, the average of this calculated figure, was about 21.6. Given that most ranges span 10 years, the actual average can reasonably be expected to be nearer 30, taking into account population distributions. This indicates that the majority of respondents became ‘Buddhist’ well into adulthood.

(‘causes of heedlessness’) is included.

Scope of the Fifth Precept

Question 12 offered a fairly standard selection of substances that are often discussed nowadays with regard to the precepts. Respondents were asked to select any number of them and encouraged to elaborate as the thinking behind the formula is important.

One respondent expressed a view of complete sobriety that reflects closely what is recorded in the early texts: “Strictly speaking, it is "drinks, elating/befuddling, the basis of heedlessness" — which, of course, includes ANY drugs/substances inducing heedlessness. The important point to know/understand with regard to the sīla is that conducting oneself in ways disregarding of any/all of these rules is what, according to the Buddha, leads to rebirth in hell, as a peta, or animal, while conducting oneself in accordance with them leads to rebirth in heavenly states. Again, there is no picking and choosing. — It is another thing entirely, that advancing practice will lead one, quite naturally, to include in one's personal "code of conduct" more, and a broader range of, practices/substances not covered by the precepts as such which are un-conducive to heedfulness.” This respondent was of the Southern School, but not a teacher or ordained.

A large majority of respondents considered both alcohol and ‘mind-altering drugs’ as covered by the Fifth Precept. Interestingly, more chose ‘mind-altering drugs’. The Pali formula only explicitly refers to alcohol and implicitly to these drugs, but modern science would include both. Further, tobacco is also medically classified as a psychoactive substance. However this option was chosen by fewer than half, with one person commenting, “To my mind the 5th precept is about not being in control of one's actions - therefore although tobacco is very undesirable and a drug I don't see it as covered by the 5th precept.” In fact, all of these except coffee are regarded by the World Health Organisation as serious global medical issues (Vaccarino and Rotzinger 2004).

Some of the comments showed awareness of contemporary issues, particularly psychopharmacy (for pain relief), though there was further confusion about what was understood by “mind-altering drugs” (perhaps the more technical psychoactive would have been more precise, but less familiar?) A very generalised response was: “It covers anything one might use to ‘fill the gap’/blunt one's feelings: video games, sex, work, iPod, iPhone etc !!” Yet quite a few expressed the view that consumption of alcohol and tobacco became intoxicating only at a certain level of intake.

What to Emphasize in the Fifth Precept?

Question 13 asked respondents to select from a number of options which they would emphasize with regards to the fifth precept. The options provided a wide selection of alternatives that include some of these more sophisticated attitudes to test for effects in current practice.

Option	Inc. Total	Inc. Proportions			
		S	N	E	W
A. There is no need to take a drop.	22	0.50	0.38	0.29	0.27

B. It is difficult to know what ill effects may arise following consumption	16	0.18	0.33	0.18	0.09
C. There is a danger that taking even very small amounts may lead to consuming more.	20	0.36	0.24	0.29	0.36
D. It is important to guard against any loss of mindfulness	45	0.68	0.62	0.76	0.73
E. Practise moderation in consumption	20	0.14	0.48	0.35	0.45
F. We should not be too rigidly attached to rules.	12	0.09	0.29	0.12	0.09
G. Practising skilful means may mean that perfections such as generosity take priority	17	0.18	0.33	0.29	0.18

Table 3: Responses to Survey Question 13

Amongst this range of responses, generally the initial ones were designed to be more conservative or cautionary, whilst the latter ones were more complex or ambiguous, allowing leeway (the second option should have been moved down).

The table provides totals for each options followed by columns for *inclusive* responses as a proportion of respondents; thus of the 22 people who indicated Southern School affiliation, 11 checked the first option, resulting in a proportion of 0.5. The fourth option – to guard against loss of mindfulness – was chosen by about three quarters and echoes the close relationship presented between *sati* and *appamāda* discussed earlier.

An examination of responses according to tradition appear to reveal differences, especially between Northern and Southern Schools. For example, in Table 4, which looks at those who indicated just one affiliation, responses from Southern Schools are noticeably higher than expected for Option A, but lower for Option E; whilst the converse is true for Northern Schools.

Q.13 Expected (Independent) values			Q.13 Actual values		
	S	N		S	N
Option A	6.57	6.18	Option A	8.00	6.00
Option E	5.41	5.09	Option E	3.00	7.00

Table 4: Expected and actual values comparing Northern and Southern Schools responses to Question 13 options A and E

To see if there was a statistical relationship between affiliation and attitudes for options A and E in Question 13, a Chi-squared test for independence with one degree of freedom was carried out on their respective responses. This is just about legitimate as expected values are above 5⁴. As

⁴This is a commonly quoted figure whereby statistical tests are deemed to be sufficiently accurate. Where this figure

computed in Excel using the CHITEST function, the p -value⁵ resulting from the Chi-squared test is 0.1467 (4 decimal places) and is greater than 0.05, so insufficient statistically to reject the null hypothesis that options chosen by North and South are done so independently. A larger sample would be more conclusive.

Formal Undertaking

All but three respondents indicated in Question 14 that observing the precept is important or really important, but more than half make no formal undertaking to do so (Question 15), even with the question suggesting that it could be done privately. However, looking at responses by School revealed a significant variation among Schools:

	S	N	E	W
Never	2	11	7	0
A few times a year	2	4	1	0
At least once a month	5	0	0	1
At least once a week	2	0	0	2
On a daily basis	6	1	0	0

Table 5: Formal undertaking of the Fifth Precept

Since most values are below 5, it is not appropriate to use Chi-squared tests, but we can use Fisher's Exact Test, particularly on the following sub-table:

	S	N
Never	2	11
Daily	6	1

Table 6: Comparison of extreme options for Southern and Northern Schools

The p -value for the test is computed⁶ to be: 0.0044 (2 s.f.) and is significant at the 0.01 level, so the null hypothesis of the two being independent can be very confidently rejected. A test for the table as a whole generates an even smaller value⁷.

Practising the Fifth Precept: Advantages and disadvantages

Question 16 investigated broader aspects of the precept in asking about the main benefits.

is less than five, particularly for small samples, other tests such as Fisher's exact test of independence are advised. Fisher's test can be applied here because our survey sample is the total sample. See e.g. McDonald, J.H. 2008. *Handbook of Biological Statistics*. Sparky House Publishing, Baltimore, Maryland, pp.64-8. Available online at: <http://udel.edu/~mcdonald/statfishers.html>

⁵ This is the probability of such a table or a more 'extreme' one being generated assuming independence.

⁶ There are several online tools, e.g. eXactoid: <http://www.exactoid.com/fisher/index.php> and Fisher Exact Test: <http://www.physics.csbsju.edu/stats/exact2.html>

⁷ We remark that in Southern Schools the precepts often are taken in conjunction with taking refuge in the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha), which is a core practice.

Option	No. Responses
A. Good physical health in this life	30
B. Skilful karma leading to rebirth in heaven realm	12
C. Improved awareness and clarity of mind	53
D. Help in meditation	30
E. Saving money	18
F. Setting a good example	23
G. Attracting good friends	8
H. Health and safety for society	35
I. A good discipline for practice in general	44
J. Peace of mind	32

Table 7: Responses to Question 16

This most popular option was C, chosen by the vast majority (also irrespective of tradition), with about half also selecting options D and J, supported by almost three quarters choosing option I. All these related to fundamental practice. Also quite favoured were some practical aspects for the present circumstances. The social awareness appeared about midway: slightly more than half of the respondents saw it as good for social welfare (option H), but very few would go so far as selecting the *kalyanamitta* (good friend) connections (option G).

Question 17 asked for comments about perceived disadvantages, to which more than half responded: eight indicated 'none.' However, a larger number picked up on potential problems in social situations, particularly expectations of consumption where alcohol is so pervasive, so that abstinence may even lead to alienation; but also the risk of "an egotistical, holier-than-thou attitude". One offered that it removes a method of relaxation; another that it shouldn't imply rejection of pleasure.

Several remarked that they considered precepts to be training principles, not rules, with a couple using the phrase "moderation" (compare with the responses for Question 13). Also stressed was need to cultivate the positive cultivation of mindfulness.

Questions 18 and 19 were asked on practice and scriptural study respectively, to see if there were correlations between these and particularly consumption. There was little variation among the Schools.

Consumption

Question 22 asked about alcohol consumption. Table 8 shows responses from those who indicated just one affiliation

	S	N	E	W
Never	13	7	5	1
3 times a year or less	0	1	1	0
About once a month	2	3	0	1
Several times a month	1	3	2	1
At least several times a week	1	2	0	0

Table 8: Responses to Question 22

It may be remarked that the majority response for all Schools is complete abstinence, though it's a far greater proportion for Southern Schools; greater consumption is noticeable for Northern Schools. Tobacco consumption (Question 23) was even less. One respondent observed a limitation in the way the two questions were phrased: "questions 22 & 23 should have a choice for people who used to drink and smoke but have already given up as to answer "Never" is not quite right." This is indicative of the survey's weakness in handling changes in circumstances.

Investigation correlations concerning alcohol consumption

Some evidence of divergence between Northern and Southern Schools emerges in correlation analyses involving a number of questions, each compared in turn for a linear relationship with responses to Question 22. As the population distribution is not known (and this is the general assumption for the survey data), the method of Spearman's rank correlation was used with coefficient ρ calculated, together with the p -value, the measure of significance.

In order to use such statistical methods, many questions had been designed to give responses on a scale: thus Question 22 asked about levels of consumption in a scale from no consumption to regular consumption ("at least several times a week"). These responses were mapped inversely to a linear scale ('0' reflecting most consumption down to '4' reflecting total abstinence). This policy was repeated for other questions.

For our first example, we illustrate using Question 6, which is the length of practice – what happens to consumption as the years of practice increases? Responses to questions 6 and 22 were compared for a linear relationship and found to have no indication of linear relationship as a whole. However, this was not the case when separating Southern and Northern Schools.

Correlations (Spearman's rho)			
		Q22S	Q6S
Q22S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.292
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.273
	N	16	16

Table 9: Correlations between Questions 22 and 6 for those exclusively from Southern Schools

Correlations (Spearman's rho)			
		Q22N	Q6N
Q22N	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.407
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.117
	N	16	16

Table 10: Correlations between Questions 22 and 6 for those exclusively from Northern Schools

For Southern Schools, there is a fairly moderate positive correlation (0.273) between getting older and reducing consumption, whereas for Northern Schools the correlation is negative (-0.407). This would suggest that as years practice increase for members of Northern Schools the consumption goes up, with the reverse for Southern Schools. However, this does not qualify as statistically significant – there is too great a chance (0.273 and 0.117) that there is no relationship between them (the null hypothesis). Again, a larger sample is needed.

Another relationship that can be examined is whether a formal undertaking to observe the 5th precept (Question 15) is linked to one’s alcohol consumption (Question 22). A Spearman’s rank correlation analysis was conducted first for the entire cohort:

Correlations				
			Q22	Q15
Spearman's rho	Q22	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.301*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.020
		N	60	59
	Q15	Correlation Coefficient	.301*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.
		N	59	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 11: Correlations between Questions 22 and 15

This indicates a moderate relationship and it’s significant, i.e. a formal commitment is reflected in reduced consumption.

When conducting the same analysis for just the Southern Schools, we find that the correlation is strong and it’s very significant:

Correlations				
			Q22S	Q15S
Spearman's rho	Q22S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.686**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
		N	16	16
	Q15S	Correlation Coefficient	.686**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
		N	16	17

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12: Correlations between Questions 22 and 15 for those exclusively from Southern Schools

However, in contrast, when conducting the analysis for just the Northern Schools, we find that the correlation is moderately negative, though it's not significant:

Correlations				
			Q22N	Q15N
Spearman's rho	Q22N	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.328
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.215
		N	16	16
	Q15N	Correlation Coefficient	-.328	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.215	.
		N	16	16

Table 13: Correlations between Questions 22 and 15 for those exclusively from Northern Schools

Similarly, when comparing responses to Questions 14 (how important) and 22 (consumption), we find for the cohort as a whole a moderate correlation (.469), with considerable significance (2-tailed p=0.000); for just the Southern Schools the correlation is high (.709) with significance at the 0.01 level; for Eastern Schools it is also high (.725), of maybe some significance (p=0.065). For Northern Schools, the correlation is somewhat only moderate (.349) and not significant (p=.185).

3.4 Section 3: Responses to hypothetical social situations

Question 24 asked about frequenting places where alcohol is predominantly served and responses were as follows:

	S	N	E	W
I avoid completely	6	3	3	1
I only go there if there's no alternative,	7	6	1	1
I go voluntarily, but less than once a month	3	5	2	1
I go voluntarily a few times a month	1	2	1	0
I go voluntarily at least once a week	0	0	1	0
I go voluntarily every day	0	0	0	0

Table 14: Responses to Question 24

There was little variation (a Fisher’s Exact Test for independence gives a figure for p of 0.796)

Question 25 asked about responses to being offered drink at social gatherings. Most indicated they would decline, though several would have a glass, whilst hardly any indicated they would just sip. A comment on this indicated that this varied depending upon how they felt at the time and also whether they had eaten beforehand to absorb the alcohol.

The responses to this question were compared with responses to Question 22 (concerning consumption) using correlation analysis. As the population distribution is not known (and this is the general assumption for the survey data), the method of Spearman’s rank correlation with calculation of co-efficient ρ and p -value, the measure of significance. The following output was generated by SPSS:

Correlations				
			Q22	Q25
Spearman's rho	Q22	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.362**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005
		N	60	58
	Q25	Correlation Coefficient	.362**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.
		N	58	59

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15: Correlations between Questions 22 and 25

There is a moderate correlation and it is very significant. Thus we can say with considerable confidence that drinking is moderately related to social drinking. People's drinking has a social context.

Questions 26 and 27 probed particularly into the social context. Question 26 asked: "If you are at a social function, do you handle alcoholic drinks (tick all that apply)?" Responses show marked divergence between Northern Schools and other others.

(Exclusive)	S	N	E	W
I give alcohol as presents	2	7	0	0
I open bottles.	3	10	0	1
I pour glasses.	3	10	1	1
I offer to buy alcoholic drinks for others.	3	5	1	0
I don't do any of the above.	11	4	6	2

Table 16: Responses to Question 26

Fisher's Exact Test for the above table gives a p -value of 0.031 (2 s.f.), which is significant at the 0.05 level, so the null hypothesis of these numbers being independently generated can be confidently rejected.

Question 27 asked: "If you were to be awarded a prize of a bottle of champagne, which of the following would you consider appropriate responses?" Here it is the Southern Schools that show marked divergence from others – in terms of avoiding alcohol completely.

(Exclusive)	S	N	E	W
Decline the bottle	2	0	0	0
Accept the bottle but empty away the contents	6	0	0	0
Leave the bottle on a shelf (do nothing).	3	4	4	0
Use the contents for cooking.	0	4	1	0
Drink the contents.	3	6	2	1
Give the bottle away	3	12	2	3
N/A - such an award is not applicable to me	4	0	1	0

Table 17: Responses to Question 27

Carrying out Fisher's Exact Test for all but the last row in this table gives a p -value of 0.011 (2 s.f.), which is very close to being significant at the 0.01 level, so the null hypothesis of these numbers being independently generated can be confidently rejected.

Similar to Question 26, many practitioners in Northern Schools opt to do something with the body – especially give it a way – which may reflect a practice of generosity as a *Paramita* (perfection).

Questions 28 and 29 sought some indications of participation in campaigns against consumption of alcohol or tobacco. There were some indications of generally modest activity, but it was little more than a quick poll-type question. The questions could have been better phrased around support for reducing and eliminating consumption – one response was: “As a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous I do not campaign against alcohol use. Instead I offer support to those that are addicted to its use.” Another responded: “I’m not sure what is being asked. If you are asking whether or not I do assert any influence upon others with regard to smoking/drinking, then the answer is Yes, I do — just not in any official function. I do feel that my example is a positive one, and at times shows some results, too.”

4. Conclusions

The survey has provided a snapshot of current practice, with some in-depth findings relating to the Fifth Precept. The responses to indicate a broad consensus among practitioners on the importance of observing the fifth precept, but there are differences of opinion as to what this means and what it entails. Even for those who shun alcohol completely, there are differing motivations and attitudes. In general, we can observe that the practitioners of the Southern Schools are taking a more literal approach, closer to the early texts (the Pali canon).

Alcohol consumption is generally low, but where there is consumption it is linked to social behaviour and appears to be in conformance to the wider social customs; from a few comments there is a sense of social pressure.

4.1 Constraints

There are many qualifications that need to be made with regards to this survey.

First, it was made available to the public to anyone with access to the Internet, which immediately excludes a significant proportion, especially in more remote rural areas, though access is generally increasing⁸. In terms of quality of the sample, the first thing to note is that the respondents are self-selecting, so there was little control – in terms of who and where they came from. As already noted, the responses came mainly from Western parts of the world. As for the implementation itself, it is open to abuse in that one person can submit any number of responses. So this survey depended on trust. However, the broad variety of responses, particularly evidenced in the comments, and the fact that every response appeared largely complete would appear to indicate a fairly rich sample, at least one sufficient for indications.

The sample size was 61 responses, which as a corpus is a good number, but in terms of representation of each tradition, the numbers are far more modest and relatively few statistical calculations have been of sufficient significance. Even so, the spread was fairly even, allowing visual clues and some statistically meaningful comparisons to be made.

⁸ Trends over the past few years have consistently been for greater usage, especially on the Web. See for instance Internet World Stats: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/>

4.2 Recommendations

The survey data supports various ways of profiling, so it should be analyzed further, especially for other correlations, perhaps based on geographical location and particular views of the precepts.

In the longer term, the survey should be repeated, but with at least a few revisions to the questions and more control over the sample: for instance, it should be conducted in multiple languages and targeted at individuals rather than self-selecting; then more details should be garnered with follow-up interviews. For a fuller picture, additional questions may be needed to gain indications of changes over time.

If seeking a more practical orientation, then collaboration with medical researchers would seem a natural way forward.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Summary Totals for each question

Questionnaire Summary

Question 1

Welcome to this survey about the 5th precept. It's designed to gather responses on how you view the precept and also how you might apply it in practice. It's in three sections - first, we ask about some demographics; then your understanding of the precept; and finally, how you'd deal with some social situations (where applicable).

First, which gender are you?

A 26 Female

B 35 Male



Question 2

Please specify your age range:

A 0 Under 18

B 7 18-24

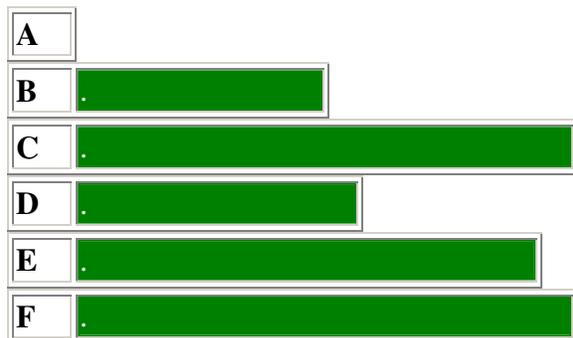
C 14 25-34

D 8 35-44

E 13 45-54

F 14 55-64

G 5 65 or over



G 

Question 3

In which area of the world do you currently reside?

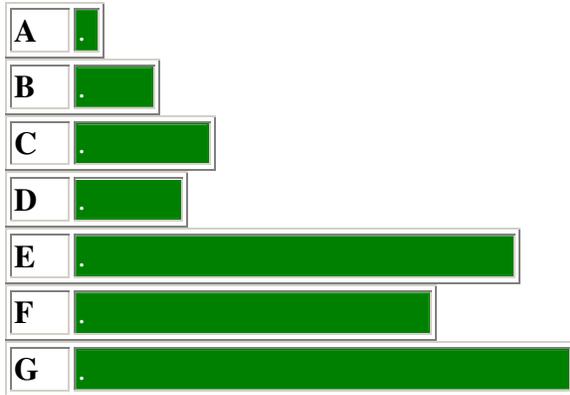
- A 2 South Asia
- B 2 SE Asia
- C 0 Central Asia
- D 0 Far East
- E 10 Oceania
- F 0 Middle East
- G 24 Europe
- H 22 North America
- I 0 South America



Question 4

What is the population of the hamlet/village/town/city where you live?

- A 1 less than 10
- B 3 10-99
- C 5 100-999
- D 4 1,000-9,999
- E 16 10,000-99,999
- F 13 100,000-999,999
- G 18 1 million or greater



Question 5

Do you consider yourself Buddhist? (If you answer 'no' then please proceed to question 10.)

A 56 Yes

B 5 No



Question 6

How long have you been practising (as Buddhist)?

A 17 0-4 years

B 10 5-9 years

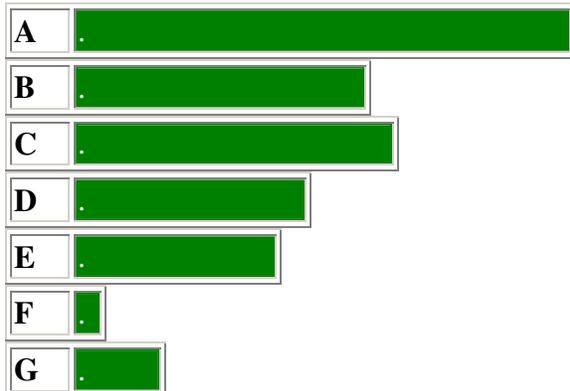
C 11 10-19 years

D 8 20-29 years

E 7 30-39 years

F 1 40-49 years

G 3 50+ years



Question 7

To what Buddhist tradition(s) do you belong? (You may select more than one box and/or add details in the comments box).

- A** 22 Southern Schools (most popularly known as Theravāda, including Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia)
- B** 21 Northern Schools (most popularly known as the Mahayāna traditions including Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan and parts of Western China)
- C** 17 Eastern Schools (most popularly known as Mahayāna traditions including China, S. Korea, Japan and Vietnam)
- D** 11 Western Schools (may incorporate aspects of other traditions plus particular adaptations)
- E** 1 Other

A	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments (Q7)

Western Chan Fellowship, U.K.

I am focusing on reaching Arhatship first, then going on to full Enlightenment.

i have recently become iterested in a logical approach, and have tried to incroporate that and buddhism into one system of thought.

Member of the Western Buddhist Order

FWBO

I consider myself a non-sectarian type of Mahayanist, but feel close to Soto Zen and Tibetan Buddhism.

No particular school. I feel comfortable with all traditions, in most ways. I suppose this is more of a global Buddhism.

Question 8

Are you a Dharma/Dhamma teacher?

A 8 Yes

B 49 No

A

B

Question 9

Are you ordained?

A 4 Yes

B 52 No

A

B

Question 10

[Questions 10-13 concern your understanding and general practice of the fifth precepts.]

The five precepts (or rules of moral training) are traditionally given as rules of training to avoid particular actions. Please select which you consider the most important.

Feel free to add a comment if you wish.

A 50 I undertake to refrain from taking life.

B 24 I undertake to refrain from taking that which is not given

C 19 I undertake to refrain from sexual misconduct.

D 24 I undertake to refrain from false speech.

E 25 I undertake to refrain from taking intoxicants.

A

B

C

D

E

Comments (Q10)

It seems that #2 could be considered the basis upon which the others are extrapolations.

They are all important.

A, B, and D can be broken at times for the greater good, C and E cannot. Furthermore, breaking E isn't as bad as breaking C. C causes to most harm. E is a close second however, as heavily breaking it can lead to breaking to other four (and causing more harm than C).

As these are intended to keep a Buddhist on the right path, I believe they are all equally important....and most of them do tie in together.

Verbal actions are much easier to do, especially when one is under the influence of unwholesome mental factors, i.e. greed, anger, ignorance, and unwholesome verbal actions will lead to bad consequences for oneself and others. So, one needs to give a particular importance to this precepts.

I see the first precept as generally concerned with non-harm. In the FWBO we pair the negative precepts with positive precepts and the first positive precept is to cultivate lovingkindness. Seen thus, the first precept embodies ahimsa, the over-arching principle of which all other the precepts are expressions.

They are all equally important to me, and all interrelated - it wouldn't make sense to me to practice them in isolation

A the most important - unless you might take intoxicants to a degree where you break any of the others. So I had to put E.

all are just as important

The question is not clear whether one should choose only one -if that is the case the most important is A. Nor do I consider these to be "rules" but rather guidelines.

To take intoxicants which is defined alcohol can loose ones concious and leads to do wrong in the other four precepts. comment: the word intoxicants seems not revelant for Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi because this specifies to alcohol as alcohol makes loosing concious..

When a person is drunk, he or she is likely to become unconscious of his or her thoughts, speeches and actions. Therefore, it is easy for him or her to harm others' life, belongings, and the beloved one, including telling a lie. I consider refraining from taking intoxicants is the most significant by all means.

The 5th precept was a subject of an interesting conference in Seoul Korea in the late 90s.

Opinions among the international scholars and clergy varied quite a bit from very strict and puritanical to "congenially indulgent" - allowing for some mood change but not sloppy drunkenness or addiction.

I don't see that they can be separated - they come as a system of training and practice rather than a set of options.

As they stand separately, I take the first precept to be the most important. However, the 5th precept can equally be important as heavy intoxication can lead to the rest of the misconducts. Therefore, I find your investigation very interesting.

Sīla means (virtuous) conduct. For my conduct to be virtuous, it must have as its guiding rule ALL FIVE sikkhāpadāni ("precepts"). For, to be "praised by the wise", and in order to be "conducive to concentration", the pañca sīlāni need to be "untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered". — There is no picking and choosing...

In the D sometime might forget to do false speech in the workplace.

taking intoxicants will cloud our mind and judgement which leads to breaking the other precepts

Question 11

The 5th precept is formulated in Pali as:

Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.

Are you familiar with this formulation?

- A 16 Very familiar
- B 9 Quite familiar
- C 7 Not very familiar
- D 29 Not familiar at all

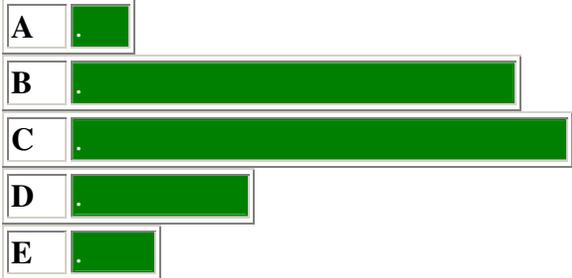
A	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 12

Which of the following do you understand is covered by the fifth precept? (Select all that apply). Feel free to elaborate on your response in the comments box.

- A 7 Caffeine

- B** 52 Alcohol
- C** 58 Mind-altering drugs
- D** 21 Tobacco
- E** 10 Other



Comments (Q12)

mind altering drugs include psychopharmacy (lithium, prozac ed) in general the 5th precept covers all substances that befuddle the mind. (make it less sharp) Caffeine does alter the mind but it does not make it less sharp, but maybe i have my own idea of the 5th precept here.

My understanding of the precept is that it translates from the Pali into English as 'I undertake the rule of training to refrain from alcohol and drugs which impair mindfulness'. I take the 5 lay precepts every year or so (I gave the nearest answer, B, to Qn. 15 below).

It's unclear if by "mind-altering drugs" you mean psychotropic prescription medications (e.g., anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, etc.) or intoxicating illegal drugs (e.g., marijuana, LSD, etc.). As I understand it, the former are allowed under the 5th precept, the latter are not.

My understanding of the precept is to avoid heedlessness, whether induced by chemical intoxicants or an obsession of any kind.

Anything that leads to a lack of mindfulness and self-control.

I believe that intoxication only refers to those stimulants that alter brain function and decision making. In my opinion, caffeine and nicotine (unless of course addiction takes place) do not.

It covers anything one might use to "fill the gap"/blunt one's feelings: video games, sex, work, iPod, iPhone etc !!

I used to abstain from alcohol completely until I realised this was skewing my practice of the precept - now I try and emphasise the +ve precept, ie developing mindfulness, rather than just thinking that abstinence is sufficient to deal with this. When drinking alcohol socially I try to limit my intake to 2 units, the same for the drink driving limit!

I understand it as intoxicating, which caffeine and tobacco are not (though I don't smoke). Other would include other intoxicants.

I would include alcohol in so far as one gets drunk (ie not in control of one's actions and mind) but not drinking alcohol per se. To my mind the 5th precept is about not being in control of one's actions - therefore although tobacco is very undesirable and a drug I don't see it as covered by the 5th precept.

Personally, I am not sure about 'Caffeine' since having not heard any prohibition about it from the early Buddhist teachings. Meanwhile, it seems regular to see a monk or nun has a cup of coffee or tea, although the amount of Caffeine might be so light.

TV, magazines, videos

Caffeine and tobacco could also qualify as intoxicants as they can affect the way one behaves

significantly. Perhaps my understanding of what is acceptable is influenced by the modern legal system.

Strictly speaking, it is "drinks, elating/befuddling, the basis of heedlessness" — which, of course, includes ANY drugs/substances inducing heedlessness. The important point to know/understand with regard to the sīla is that conducting oneself in ways disregarding of any/all of these rules is what, according to the Buddha, leads to rebirth in hell, as a peta, or animal, while conducting oneself in accordance with them leads to rebirth in heavenly states. Again, there is no picking and choosing. — It is another thing entirely, that advancing practice will lead one, quite naturally, to include in one's personal "code of conduct" more, and a broader range of, practices/substances not covered by the precepts as such which are un-conducive to heedfulness.

Non-sacramental (i.e., hedonistic) use of psychotropic substances that open up the reducing valve to Mind at Large, to cite the author Aldous Huxley.

Question 13

Which of the following options would you emphasize with regards to the fifth precept? (You may select more than one option).

- A 22 There is no need to take a drop.
- B 16 It is difficult to know what ill effects may arise following consumption
- C 20 There is a danger that taking even very small amounts may lead to consuming more.
- D 45 It is important to guard against any loss of mindfulness
- E 20 Practise moderation in consumption
- F 12 We should not be too rigidly attached to rules.
- G 17 Practising skilful means may mean that perfections such as generosity take priority

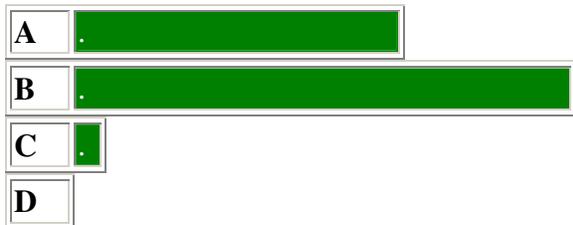
A	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 14

How important is it for practitioners to observe the 5th precept?

- A 23 Really important

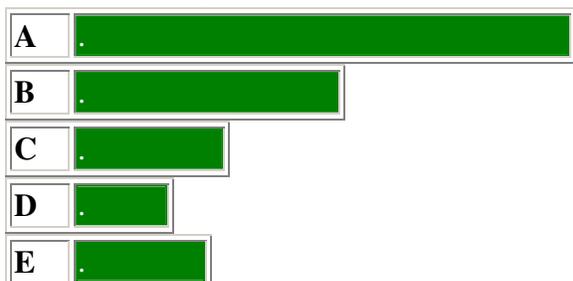
- B** 35 Important
- C** 2 Not very important
- D** 0 Not important at all



Question 15

Do you ever formally undertake to observe the 5th precept (e.g. by chanting a formula in front of a Buddha image)?

- A** 26 Never
- B** 14 A few times a year
- C** 8 At least once a month
- D** 5 At least once a week
- E** 7 On a daily basis



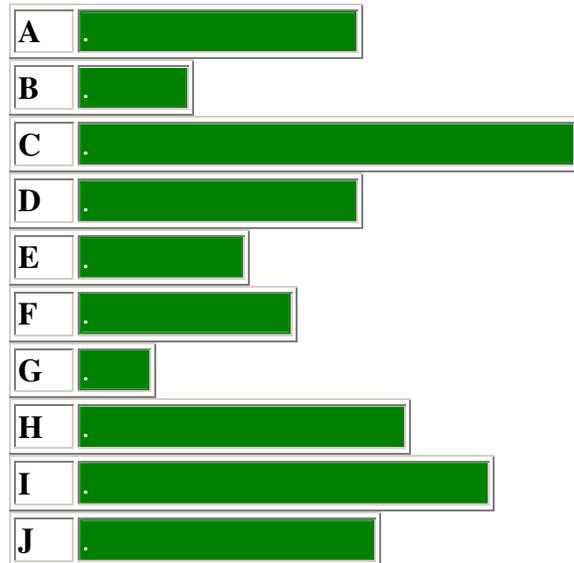
Question 16

What do you regard as the main **benefits** of observing the 5th precept (tick all that apply). You may also add further suggestions in the comments box

- A** 30 Good physical health in this life
- B** 12 Skilful karma leading to rebirth in heaven realm
- C** 53 Improved awareness and clarity of mind
- D** 30 Help in meditation
- E** 18 Saving money
- F** 23 Setting a good example
- G** 8 Attracting good friends
- H** 35 Health and safety for society

I 44 A good discipline for practice in general

J 32 Peace of mind



Comments (Q16)

Re: (F), I think it's important to not be shy about one's not drinking/using drugs, since I'm sure that there many people who do get intoxicated, but aren't comfortable with it, or are searching for another group of friends in which intoxication wouldn't be almost compulsory for socializing.

I'm not much concerned with rebirth, but I definitely see clarity of mind leading to more ethical choices, therefore greater happiness for me and those on whom I have an effect.

But it depends on how one interprets observing the 5th precept - I see it as not being intoxicated not necessarily not drinking alcohol . However thee is a problem with the use of alcohol in society, especially amongst young people.

I feel C is the main and original reason for the 5th precept while the health and safty elements are rather incidental. However, it has to to be admitted that, while alcohol can have a damaging effect on one's awareness, it does lead to a temporal 'peace of mind' when consumed in moderation, which is ironic.

I might have checked all — but those are the most important ones. The positive effects which strict sobriety has on all aspects of life, worldly and religious, cannot in any way be overstated.

Citta visuddhi (mind purification).

Question 17 (Comments)

What do you regard as the main **disadvantages** (if any) of the 5th precept?

None

missing out on social activities. clarity of mind is not an advantage in itself

To me, to refrain from alcohol and drugs which impair mindfulness means avoid impairing mindfulness; i.e. do not take drugs, take alcohol in moderation, e.g. a glass of wine or a pint of beer with a meal.

A strict interpretation of the fifth precept severely limits a lay practitioners ability to engage and integrate their practice with the secular world. It can also lead to other forms of rigidity, which are counterproductive and can lead to an egotistical, holier-than-thou attitude. Not to mention the use of alcohol in traditional Tibetan medicine and the overall deliciousness of beer.

unbearable mental pain in some cases

None

I don't think there are any. I have no use for intoxicants.

Occasions where one is expected to drink alcohol, and having to explain.

It can alienate you.

None

-- reduced choices in methods of relaxation

Difficult

It can be hard to avoid intoxicants (alcohol especially) in a society where casual and heavy drinking is very common.

it should not be put too rigidly

Cloudy mind and may be loss of awareness after consuming mind-altering drugs increases the chance of performing unwholesome kamma. Thus it is unbeneficial for oneself and others, which could have wider adverse effects on the society.

Can't think of any at all. But then I see the precepts as training principles, not rules. So the 5th is about moderation and awareness, not abstinence.

The emphasis on the -ve precept can lead to folk missing the point - speaking from personal experience! i.e. simply abstaining from alcohol/tobacco etc. being all that is sufficient to observe the precept - when actively cultivating mindfulness, the +ve precept, is so much more challenging and richer.

None

too rigid adherence to it

It can be rigidly practised I don't think that Buddhist practice should be seen as opposing some pleasures

Current addiction

-loose concious and leads to do wrong in the other 4 precepts -lead to accidents -make a quarrel - loose money -rebirth in hell or being animal or mad human

None - but then in daily life I interpret it as moderation rather than strict abstinence. I suppose socially there is pressure in some circles to drink and celebrate drunkenness, but it doesn't particularly bother me, nor do I judge people who do.

it's only a rule...

I miss a cool refreshing beer on a hot dry day with my mates :-)

Loss of mindfulness and therefore increased possibility of breaking other vows/behaving unskillfully.

Uptightness, snobbery, socially limiting because one may refuse social interactions where drink is shared; those who indulge with moderation may feel judged by the puritanical righteous.

I cannot tell as I have never formally taken the vow.

There are none.

NONE

Opposite to the above

-

none

there is none

Social isolation in some societies, e.g. Korea, where business associates view the non-drinker

with some suspicion.

Question 18

[The next three questions are on general study and practice]

Do you study Buddhist texts (e.g. suttas/sutras)?

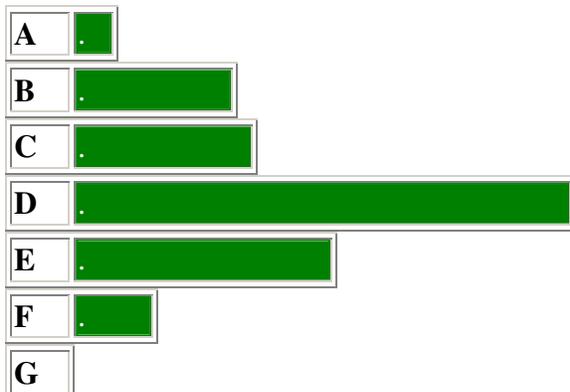
- A 3 Never
- B 21 Once a month or less
- C 14 Several times a month
- D 14 Several times a week
- E 9 Every day



Question 19

Do you practise meditation (*bhavana*)?

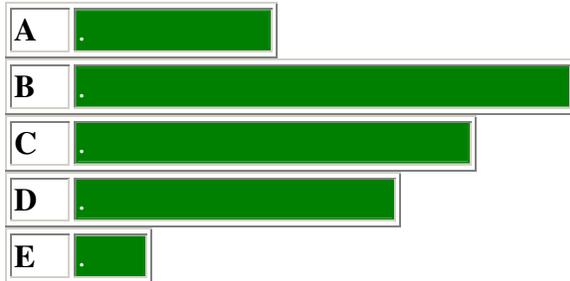
- A 2 Never
- B 8 A few times a month or less
- C 9 At least once a week
- D 25 less than 1 hour a day
- E 13 at least 1 hour, less than 2 hours a day
- F 4 at least 2 hours, less than 4 hours a day
- G 0 4 hours or more a day



Question 20

How frequently do you participate in activities at a Buddhist centre/temple?

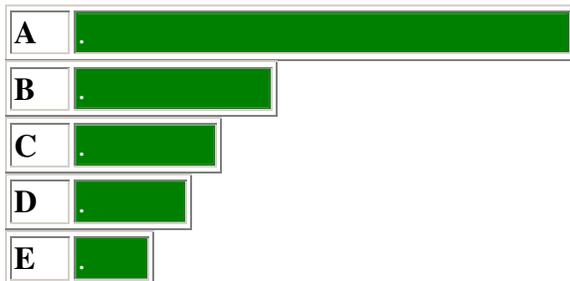
- A 8 Never
- B 20 A few times a year
- C 16 At least once a month
- D 13 At least once a week
- E 3 On a daily basis



Question 21

In terms of alcohol avoidance, which of the following should not be knowingly consumed (ingested)? From the list below please select all that apply.

- A 52 drinks
- B 21 jellies
- C 15 sauces
- D 12 cakes
- E 8 medicines

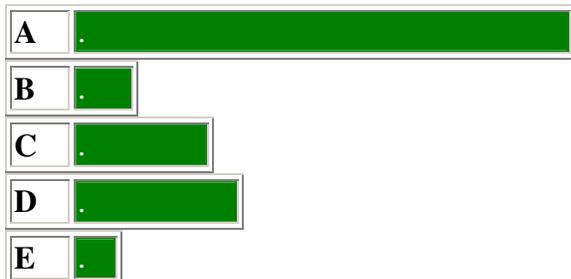


Question 22

How often do you drink alcohol (wine, beer, spirits etc)?

- A 33 Never
- B 4 3 times a year or less

- C 9 About once a month
- D 11 Several times a month
- E 3 At least several times a week



Question 23

Do you smoke tobacco?

- A 53 Never
- B 1 On average less than once a month
- C 0 At least once a month, but less than once a week
- D 5 At least once a week



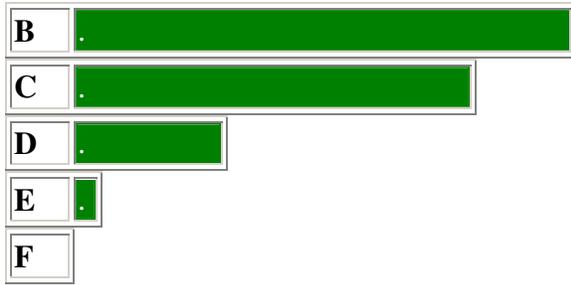
Question 24

[The final few questions present scenarios in society.]

What is your attitude/habit concerning attendance of bars, pubs and other places that serve mainly alcoholic beverages?

- A 18 I avoid completely
- B 20 I only go there if there's no alternative, e.g. to have lunch on the odd occasion
- C 16 I go voluntarily, but less than once a month
- D 6 I go voluntarily a few times a month
- E 1 I go voluntarily at least once a week
- F 0 I go voluntarily every day

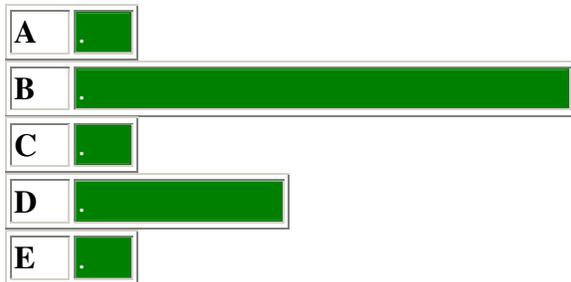




Question 25

If you are offered drinks at social gatherings, what is your response?

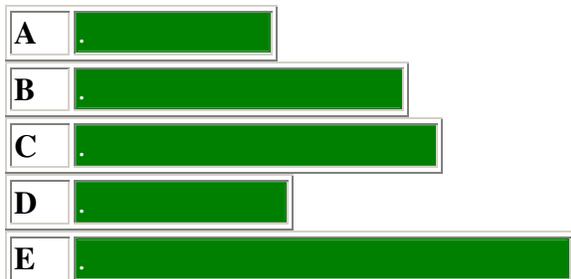
- A 4 I avoid gatherings where alcohol is served
- B 33 Decline
- C 4 Have a small sip.
- D 14 Have a glass.
- E 4 Have more than a glass.



Question 26

If you are at a social function, do you handle alcoholic drinks (tick all that apply)?:

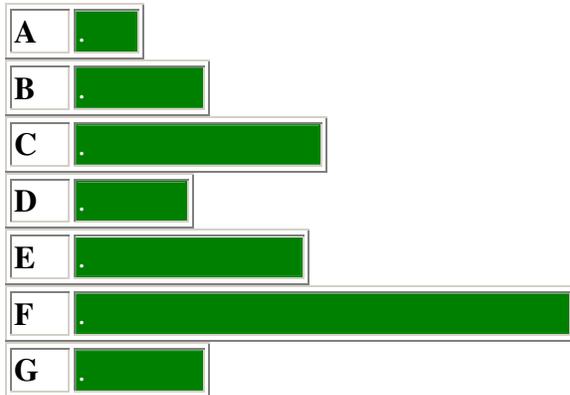
- A 12 I give alcohol as presents
- B 20 I open bottles.
- C 22 I pour glasses.
- D 13 I offer to buy alcoholic drinks for others.
- E 30 I don't do any of the above.



Question 27

If you were to be awarded a prize of a bottle of champagne, which of the following would you consider appropriate responses? (You may select multiple options).

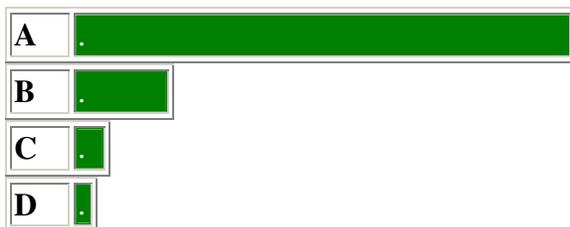
- A 4 Decline the bottle
- B 8 Accept the bottle but empty away the contents
- C 15 Leave the bottle on a shelf (do nothing).
- D 7 Use the contents for cooking.
- E 14 Drink the contents.
- F 30 Give the bottle away
- G 8 N/A - such an award is not applicable to me



Question 28

Are you or have you ever been involved in anti-tobacco or non-smoking education, campaigns or any other similar initiatives?

- A 46 Never
- B 9 Once
- C 3 A few times, but less than once a month
- D 1 At least once a month, but less than once a week.
- E 1 At least once a week, but not daily
- F 1 Daily



E	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
F	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Question 29

Are you or have you ever been involved in anti-alcohol education, campaigns or any other similar initiatives?

- A 48 Never
- B 8 Once
- C 3 A few times, but less than once a month
- D 1 At least once a month, but less than once a week.
- E 0 At least once a week, but not daily
- F 0 Daily

A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 30

If you have any other comments or suggestions, please feel free to enter them below.

Comments (Q30)

Please forward your findings to my mail address, if you can. ***** BTW Nice Survey :)

interesting subject. also what is the relation between the 5th precept and psycho pharmacy especially if it is about forced medication. do send me the result from your study if you like and contact me if I can help you *****

Re: Q,29. As a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous I do not campaign against alcohol use. Instead I offer support to those that are addicted to its use.

Since the mind is the leader of mental phenomena (Dhammapada), the mind altering drugs, which lead to loss of awareness/mindfulness, must be avoided. In this sense, one thinks it is the most important precept to observe.

question 25 doesn't offer the answer which fits me. sometimes I drink the odd beer or glass of wine at a party. Sometimes I have water/orange juice. It's not a matter of principle, but of how I feel that day, or whether or not there is food to soak up the alcohol!

I'm currently a college student who is struggling with the intoxicant part of the precept. Though I haven't taken them formally, I still feel like I shouldn't drink, but I also don't want to miss out on the experience that everyone else is enjoying. I also feel a lot of pressure considering my entire family drinks. I am very much for the remaining parts of the precept though. I am likely to drink during my college years, but I will try my hardest to keep it within moderation.

I tried to give the closest answers. Even the questions were thought provoking. Thank you.

Some of the questions are not clear and do not allow the opportunity to fully respond. For example quest 27 - I would not drink the whole bottle of champagne but save it for a special occasion to share with friends. What do the questions in 28 mean ? I have beeninvolved in anti-smoking campaigns but do not do it every day - but the response "once" is not appropriate. Similarly ques. 28 does not allow for involvement in education for young people about the dangers of alcohol use - with which I have been involved. The issue for me about alcohol is learning how to use it.

All the best to the surveyor's accomplishment of this survey and his course. May Buddhas in all Nirvana bless you.

Very interesting to think about my responses to this survey. I suppose interpret the precept as a means to an end (i.e. being about maintaining clarity of mind and not putting myself in the position where I might break one of the other precepts through lack of mindfulness) rather than a

absolute and rigid rule in its own right - this is how it has been presented to me by my teachers anyway. The exception would be on retreat where I do keep the precept strictly. But in daily life, I do drink, though never to excess and never to get drunk. I found Q22 hard to answer as I do consume alcohol fairly regularly but in very small quantities - we're talking half a glass at a time. And likewise Q25 - I would either drink something non-alcoholic or drink a small amount of an alcoholic drink depending on my mood, what was on offer, whether I was driving etc.

Good luck with your study!

I feel uneasy with the design or the assumptions of this research. it does not allow for acceptable alternatives interpretations of the precepts or an understanding that the precepts developed situationally..i.e. they were not a rigid set of rules as i understand their development, not commandments from on high. Converts often assume that all of us in society belong in an AA group. More wisdom and kindness can be found in pubs than monasteries and nunneries. And insight, too. I am not a drinker nor do I indulge in drugs. and i have worked in rehabilitation with alcoholics and addicts.

Your survey has given me a good opportunity to reflect on my stance (to the Buddhist precepts) and lifestyle. Thank you.

Regarding Qs 28/29, I'm not sure what is being asked. If you are asking whether or not I do assert any influence upon others with regard to smoking/drinking, then the answer is Yes, I do — just not in any official function. I do feel that my example is a positive one, and at times shows some results, too. I wish you all the best with your studies, and practice!

In Q25 for my actual action I was accepted the drink but left it without drinking. In the social life if you decline the drink it might encourage them to offer you more.

answers for questions 22 & 23 should have a choice for people who used to drink and smoke but have already given up as to answer "Never" is not quite right. Not sure if this will be relevant to the study.

I recognise the use of ritual and/or sacramental use of alcohol or mind-altering substances in some special circumstances. However, this should be only for the skilled contemplative who has gained some good measure of purity of mind, i.e. has dealt adequately with the mental defilements-neuroses. Thank you. Good luck with your research.

Appendix B: Selected Totals by Tradition

The following table provides totals according to each of the Four Schools, as asked in Question 7, together with some proportions. (T1: Total for entire sample; T2 is the exclusive total for the four Schools.)

Qn.	Inclusive totals and proportions										Exclusive totals and proportions								
	T1	S	N	E	W		S	N	E	W	S	N	E	W	T2	S	N	E	W
Q1A	26	11	9	5	4						10	7	2	2					
Q1B	35	11	12	12	7						7	9	6	1					
Q2A	0	0	0	0	0						0	0	0	0					
Q2B	7	3	3	2	2						1	2	0	0					
Q2C	14	5	4	3	2						4	3	2	1					
Q2D	8	3	3	1	0						3	3	1	0					
Q2E	13	6	3	3	2						6	3	2	1					
Q2F	14	4	7	6	4						3	4	2	0					
Q2G	5	1	1	2	1						0	1	1	1					
Q7A	22	22									17								
Q7B	21		21									16							
Q7C	17			17									8						
Q7D	11				11									3					
Q10A	50										12	15	6	3		0.71	0.94	0.75	1.00
Q10B	24										9	2	4	2		0.53	0.13	0.50	0.67
Q10C	19										8	1	2	2		0.47	0.06	0.25	0.67
Q10D	24										10	2	4	2		0.59	0.13	0.50	0.67
Q10E	25										11	2	3	2		0.65	0.13	0.38	0.67
Q11A	16	12	2	1	3						10	2	0	2	14				
Q11B	9	4	3	3	2						4	1	1	0	6				
Q11C	7	3	2	1	1						3	2	1	1	7				
Q11D	29	3	14	12	5						0	11	6	0	17				
Q12A	7	2	2	2	1		0.09	0.10	0.12	0.09	2	2	2	1		0.12	0.13	0.25	0.33
Q12B	52	20	19	15	9		0.91	0.90	0.88	0.82	16	14	7	2		0.94	0.88	0.88	0.67
Q12C	58	22	20	16	11		1.00	0.95	0.94	1.00	17	15	7	3		1.00	0.94	0.88	1.00
Q12D	21	9	7	6	6		0.41	0.33	0.35	0.55	8	5	2	2		0.47	0.31	0.25	0.67
Q12E	10																		
Q13(a)	22	11	8	5	3		0.50	0.38	0.29	0.27	8	6	3	0	17	0.47	0.38	0.38	0.00
Q13(b)	16	4	7	3	1		0.18	0.33	0.18	0.09	4	7	2	0	13	0.24	0.44	0.25	0.00
Q13(c)	20	8	5	5	4		0.36	0.24	0.29	0.36	6	4	3	1	14	0.35	0.25	0.38	0.33
Q13(d)	45	15	13	13	8		0.68	0.62	0.76	0.73	12	11	6	2	31	0.71	0.69	0.75	0.67
Q13(e)	20	3	10	6	5		0.14	0.48	0.35	0.45	3	7	2	2	14	0.18	0.44	0.25	0.67
Q13(f)	12	2	6	2	1		0.09	0.29	0.12	0.09	1	6	1	1	9	0.06	0.38	0.13	0.33
Q13(g)	17	4	7	5	2		0.18	0.33	0.29	0.18	3	6	2	0	11	0.18	0.38	0.25	0.00
Q15A	26	2	12	10	2						2	11	7	0	20				
Q15B	14	6	6	5	4						2	4	1	0	7				
Q15C	8	6	1	1	2						5	0	0	1	6				
Q15D	5	2	1	1	3						2	0	0	2	4				
Q15E	7	6	1	0	0						6	1	0	0	7				
Q.16(a)	30	12	10	7	7		0.55	0.48	0.41	0.64	8	6	1	1		0.47	0.38	0.13	0.33
Q.16(b)	12	5	6	2	1		0.23	0.29	0.12	0.09	4	5	1	0		0.24	0.31	0.13	0.00
Q.16(c)	53	18	19	14	11		0.82	0.90	0.82	1.00	14	15	5	3		0.82	0.94	0.63	1.00
Q.16(d)	30	11	9	9	6		0.50	0.43	0.53	0.55	8	7	3	0		0.47	0.44	0.38	0.00

Q.16(e)	18	7	6	5	4		0.32	0.29	0.29	0.36	4	4	1	0		0.24	0.25	0.13	0.00
Q.16(f)	23	8	9	9	6		0.36	0.43	0.53	0.55	5	5	4	1		0.29	0.31	0.50	0.33
Q.16(g)	8	3	3	3	2		0.14	0.14	0.18	0.18	3	2	1	0		0.18	0.13	0.13	0.00
Q.16(h)	35	11	13	12	10		0.50	0.62	0.71	0.91	7	8	4	2		0.41	0.50	0.50	0.67
Q.16(i)	44	11	18	13	9		0.50	0.86	0.76	0.82	8	13	6	2		0.47	0.81	0.75	0.67
Q.16(j)	32	13	7	10	8		0.59	0.33	0.59	0.73	10	5	4	1		0.59	0.31	0.50	0.33
Q18A	3	2	0	0	0						2	0	0	0					
Q18B	21	6	7	9	6						4	6	3	1					
Q18C	14	5	3	4	1						5	2	3	1					
Q18D	14	4	8	3	3						3	6	1	1					
Q18E	9	5	3	1	1						3	2	1	0					
Q19A	2	0	2	1	0						0	1	0	0					
Q19B	8	3	1	4	4						2	0	0	1					
Q19C	9	5	1	2	1						3	0	2	0					
Q19D	25	7	9	9	6						5	7	5	2					
Q19E	13	6	5	1	0						6	5	1	0					
Q19F	4	1	3	0	0						1	3	0	0					
Q19G	0	0	0	0	0						0	0	0	0					
Q21(a)	52	22	16	14	7		1.00	0.76	0.82	0.64	17	13	7	1		1.00	0.81	0.88	0.33
Q21(b)	21	9	6	6	3		0.41	0.29	0.35	0.27	6	4	4	0		0.35	0.25	0.50	0.00
Q21(c)	15	9	3	4	2		0.41	0.14	0.24	0.18	7	2	3	0		0.41	0.13	0.38	0.00
Q21(d)	12	7	3	4	1		0.32	0.14	0.24	0.09	6	2	3	0		0.35	0.13	0.38	0.00
Q21(e)	8	4	1	3	0		0.18	0.05	0.18	0.00	4	1	3	0		0.24	0.06	0.38	0.00
Q22A	33	17	9	7	4						13	7	5	1	26				
Q22B	4	0	1	2	1						0	1	1	0	2				
Q22C	9	3	3	2	2						2	3	0	1	6				
Q22D	11	1	6	6	4						1	3	2	1	7				
Q22E	3	1	2	0	0						1	2	0	0	3				
Q24A	18	8	5	5	3						6	3	3	1	13				
Q24B	20	9	7	4	4						7	6	1	1	15				
Q24C	16	4	6	4	3						3	5	2	1	11				
Q24D	6	1	3	3	1						1	2	1	0	4				
Q24E	1	0	0	1	0						0	0	1	0	1				
Q24F	0	0	0	0	0						0	0	0	0	0				
Q25A	4	3	1	1	0						2	0	1	0	3				
Q25B	33	15	9	8	5						12	8	5	1	26				
Q25C	4	1	1	2	1						0	1	0	0	1				
Q25D	14	2	7	6	4						2	4	2	1	9				
Q25E	4	1	2	0	0						1	2	0	0	3				
Q26A	12	2	9	2	1		0.09	0.43	0.12	0.09	2	7	0	0		0.12	0.44	0.00	0.00
Q26B	20	5	12	3	2		0.23	0.57	0.18	0.18	3	10	0	1		0.18	0.63	0.00	0.33
Q26C	22	4	13	4	3		0.18	0.62	0.24	0.27	3	10	1	1		0.18	0.63	0.13	0.33
Q26D	13	4	7	3	1		0.18	0.33	0.18	0.09	3	5	1	0		0.18	0.31	0.13	0.00
Q26E	30	14	5	9	6		0.64	0.24	0.53	0.55	11	4	6	2		0.65	0.25	0.75	0.67
Q27A	4	3	1	1	1		0.14	0.05	0.06	0.09	2	0	0	0		0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00
Q27B	8	7	0	1	1		0.32	0.00	0.06	0.09	6	0	0	0		0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00
Q27C	15	3	6	7	2		0.14	0.29	0.41	0.18	3	4	4	0		0.18	0.25	0.50	0.00
Q27D	7	1	4	1	1		0.05	0.19	0.06	0.09	0	4	1	0		0.00	0.25	0.13	0.00
Q27E	14	3	7	3	2		0.14	0.33	0.18	0.18	3	6	2	1		0.18	0.38	0.25	0.33
Q27F	30	6	15	9	8		0.27	0.71	0.53	0.73	3	12	2	3		0.18	0.75	0.25	1.00
Q27G	8	4	1	2	1		0.18	0.05	0.12	0.09	4	0	1	0		0.24	0.00	0.13	0.00

Appendix C: Some Correlation Tables

Correlations

			Q22	Q14
Spearman's rho	Q22	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.469**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	60	59
	Q14	Correlation Coefficient	.469**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	59	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Q22S	Q14S
Spearman's rho	Q22S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.709**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	16	16
	Q14S	Correlation Coefficient	.709**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	16	17

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Q22N	Q14N
Spearman's rho	Q22N	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.349
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.185
		N	16	16
	Q14N	Correlation Coefficient	.349	1.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.
	N	16	16

Correlations

			Q22E	Q14E
Spearman's rho	Q22E	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.725
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.065
		N	8	7
	Q14E	Correlation Coefficient	.725	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	.
		N	7	7

Correlations

			Q22N	Q6N
Spearman's rho	Q22N	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.407
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.117
		N	16	16
	Q6N	Correlation Coefficient	-.407	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.117	.
		N	16	16

Correlations

			Q22S	Q6S
Spearman's rho	Q22S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.292
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.273
		N	16	16
	Q6S	Correlation Coefficient	.292	1.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.273	.
	N	16	17

Correlations

			Q22S	Q11S
Spearman's rho	Q22S	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.595*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.015
		N	16	16
	Q11S	Correlation Coefficient	.595*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.
		N	16	17

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

			Q22N	Q11N
Spearman's rho	Q22N	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.038
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.890
		N	16	16
	Q11N	Correlation Coefficient	.038	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.890	.
		N	16	16